

Town of Stafford
Planning & Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting
July 15, 2021
Veterans Conference Room

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TOWN CLERK

Members Present: Dave Palmberg, Chair
Dr. David Mordasky
Ron Houle
Rich Shuck (arrived later during the public hearing)
Leonard Clark, alternate

Also Present: David Perkins, Zoning Enforcement Officer
Joe Perugini, P.E., Wesson & Sampson
Greg Pando, Pando Associates Architects
Public

Public Hearing:

Special Permit and Site Plan application of Ken Hyslip, P.O. Box 36, Tewksbury, MA to construct a 35,047 sq. ft. warehouse addition at 10 Middle River Drive in accordance with Section 5.2B and 8.11 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Stafford.

Property Owner: 10 & 14 Middle River Drive, LLC

Location: 10 Middle River Drive; **Map** 47, **Lot** 17.1, **Zone:** IN'

David Palmberg opened the public hearing at 7:10 P.M. establishing a quorum with David Palmberg, Chair; Ron Houle, Dr. David Mordasky, and seating alternate member Leonard Clark for Cindy Rummel.

Ron Houle read the legal notice.

Joe Perugini, P.E., with Wesson and Sampson attended the meeting with Greg Pando of Pando Associates Architects.

Joe Perugini described the existing site which consists of a warehouse and office space. About two-thirds of the property is developed. There is existing parking for 57 spaces which is ample for their needs. This parcel is in an industrial zone and is bordered on three sides by other industrial businesses. There is landscaping around the parking area. There are no wetlands within 100 feet of the project.

The applicant would like to construct a 35,047 sq. ft. addition and they are trying to keep the slopes at 3 to 1 or less. The addition will have three overhead doors. They found the existing driveway needs to be widened to accommodate tractor trailers but they are keeping this expansion to a minimum. This will include a bump-out.

Joe Perugini described how runoff will be handled. Most of the roof runoff and overland water will go to a detention basin on the west side. They found there are good soils there so they may be able to flatten the slopes somewhat. Runoff from the pavement in the front will be directed to a bio-retention basin on the south side. He said there is a catch basin in the grassed area and one near the loading dock.

Joe Perugini described the bio-retention process, pretreatment, and that runoff will flow through a stone filter berm, so that everything will get treated. The plan also includes a detailed Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan that adheres to Connecticut guidelines. He reviewed these plans, noting they have to double up measures on slopes per DEEP.

A landscaping plan was also submitted. Disturbed areas will be seeded. The bio-retention pond will have a layer of mulch. There will be new trees—pin oaks and elms—which meet minimum spacing requirements.

David Perkins asked if there will be any plantings in the ponds. Joe Perugini said they were not proposing any. They are going with a typical bio-retention basin with a soil medium for treatment. It will have a perforated pipe in the bottom with crushed stone. The good soils in the area should preclude there being any standing water.

Dr. Mordasky asked how much time the project would take. Greg Pando said they are hoping for a fall start and making the project weather tight by winter. They hope to complete the project by late winter or early spring.

David Palmberg asked if the new loading dock area would be the only one or if they would also be using the existing location. Joe Perugini said they would be using both. He said on average there would be one to two trucks coming in each day. David Palmberg asked about lighting at the site. Joe Perugini reviewed the lighting locations. They will be pointed inward and shielded.

David Palmberg asked if there was a post construction maintenance plan for the two basins. Joe Perugini said there was and it is included in the Stormwater Plans. David Palmberg asked that this be added to the main plan. David Palmberg noted that grading might be able to be done due to the good soils and suggested grading a ramp area toward the southeast for maintenance equipment access. Joe Perugini said they would try to do this.

Ron Houle asked if a temporary construction site fence would be put up. Joe Perugini said they would do that.

David Palmberg asked if there would be any mechanicals on the roof of the new addition. Greg Pando said there would only be mechanicals through the side wall such as vent fans, louvers, and

for heat. Dave also asked about fertilizers and chemicals. Greg Pando said there would only be minimum quantities of ammonium nitrate.

Rich Shuck arrived to the meeting at this time.

Leonard Clark asked for a more complete explanation about what a bio-retention basin is and what would flow into it. Joe Perugini said it would take runoff from the two catch basins, the front yard and pavement. It is comprised of a layer of sediment, a natural filter and it is pervious with some organics.

The public hearing was opened to public comment. There were no comments or questions.

Greg Pando noted adjustments were made to the proposed roof in order to conform to regulations.

Ron Houle made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Dr. Mordasky. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Agenda

1. Call to order and establish a quorum
2. Approve minutes of 7/1/2021 meeting
3. Discussion and possible approval of public hearing item
4. Discussion about Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) due October 2022
5. Discussion about zoning map updates
6. Discussion about recent state legislation
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

1. Call to order and establish a quorum.

David Palmberg called the meeting to order immediately following the public hearing. The same quorum that was established for the public hearing remained in place.

2. Approve minutes of 7/1/2021 meeting.

Dr. Mordasky made a motion to approve the 7/1/2021 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Rich Shuck. Dr. Mordasky, Rich Shuck, David Palmberg, and Leonard Clark voted in favor. Ron Houle abstained. Motion carried.

3. Discussion and possible approval of public hearing item.

David Palmberg said his only request is that the post construction plans be included on the main plan. Ron Houle said he would want a temporary construction fence to be installed to ensure safety during construction.

Ron Houle made a motion, seconded by Dr. Mordasky to approve the Special Permit and Site Plan application to construct a 35,047 sq. ft. warehouse addition at 10 Middle River Drive in accordance with Section 5.2B and 8.11 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town

of Stafford based on plans from Weston & Sampson dated June 30, 2021 entitled Griffin Greenhouse Supply Warehouse Addition with the following additional requirements:

- The post construction maintenance plan must be included on the plans.
- A temporary construction fence must be installed to ensure safety during construction

A vote was taken on the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. Discussion about Plan of Conservation and Development due October 2022.

This discussion was devoted to infrastructure and town buildings. The Commission reviewed the 2016 infrastructure plan for sewer, water, gas and internet. David Perkins put up a map from 2014-2015. Presently sewer has been extended almost to the Bolles property and water will be completed soon.

Dave Palmberg said they need to find out what the town's limitations are on the sewer plant. They are currently running at 70 percent capacity due to a filter situation. He said they are aware of one restriction on West Street. He said they will need to reach out to Rick Hartenstein about the WPCF capacity and what their ten year plan includes and they need to be in concert with that. They know there are space limitations. Ron Houle noted that 3M is installing their own system which might help alleviate capacity demands.

Dr. Mordasky asked if anyone knew the life expectancy of the sewer plant. It was agreed there are a lot of variables.

Rich Shuck said while the discussion is always going to be about cost and capacity, they need to be forward thinking and put goals into the POCD. If they include a vision, it could be helpful if grant money becomes available. David Palmberg said they also have to be realistic about the capacity of the plant and the service district. Rich Shuck said the WPCF is also constrained by the requirement to honor set reserves for existing businesses.

The Commission discussed water needs, noting the water tower that was approved is yet to be built. David Palmberg said they also need to encourage fiberoptics in the plan.

David Perkins suggested they might want to encourage creating hot spots where people could pick up free wifi in Downtown Stafford or other key areas.

The Commission discussed dams in town. The town owns four—the New City dam and another near it, the Staffordville dam, and the Glenville dam—and the Commission agreed they should talk to Director of Public Works Devin Cowperthwaite about maintenance plans. There are also many more federal, state and private dams in town. They confirmed they still have a dam committee. The Commission agreed there is a need to investigate financial resources, if possible, for private dam owners.

The Commission discussed the storm drain system. David Palmberg said presently the town is exempt from MS4 requirements. This is a town-wide stormwater management plan where towns must inventory and monitor outlets, where water testing may be required and where they need to prevent unlawful discharges. He said they should encourage best practices and that when a catch basin is replaced, do the necessary upgrades such as adding a hood if necessary and adding an annual maintenance plan of it. The Commission agreed they should recommend and promote educational programs (such as with flyers) about the proper maintenance of catch basins. David Perkins said they are trying to get together a GIS system for Public Works so they can map things when they do work on a catch basin.

The Commission also recommended that combined sewer and stormwater systems be identified and separated.

The Commission discussed town owned buildings. The two largest of concern are the Witt School and the Staffordville School. Leonard Clark provided some history on the development of the Witt School. He said the Historic Advisory Commission advises that if the town cannot own the Witt building and maintain it for a use that would be beneficial to the town, then it should be demolished. He said the Hyde Park Commission recommends it be demolished with the land reverted back to Hyde Park. Leonard Clark said he has documents from both Commissions about their recommendations on his home computer and will share that with Commission members.

Leonard Clark said the Historic Advisory Commission has other proposed possibilities for the Witt School. These include making it into an open air pavilion, using it for a farmers market, or renting it out for incubator businesses. However selling the building with the land would be problematic because it is in Hyde Park.

Rich Shuck said he served on a board years ago to determine what to do with the school and it was recommended that it be used for the Board of Education and town offices, but in the end the town found the costs of doing it unpalatable. It would cost at least 35 million to build a new school. The thought was to turn Town Hall into an arts and cultural center.

Dr. Mordasky said they need to address the issue in baby steps. He said they could tear the building down at one cost or rehab it for more. However, if the town wants to maintain ownership of the Witt School, then they at least have to maintain it by boarding up the windows and heating it minimally until they decide what to do.

David Palmberg asked David Perkins if they have any annual maintenance costs to do that. David Perkins said they have plans for a million dollar plus upgrade to make Town Hall fully usable. They could move some offices at Town Hall to the Staffordville School and possible move Family Services there also.

Leonard Clark said the Witt School could have multiple uses. Dr. Mordasky said the public might be sold on maintaining the Witt School until they determine what to do with

it. There is a lot of sentimental value around that building. David Perkins asked if it would make sense to put out a request for interest to developers. He said they need to show their due diligence. If nothing else, they might be able to get brownfield money to be used toward demolishing it.

There was also discussion about if it were demolished, leaving a small monument in place in memory of the former school Rich Shuck suggested it could also be renovated to be used as a cloud server farm.

There was general agreement that they should recommend maintenance encapsulation of the Witt School until further decisions could be made.

The Commission discussed the Staffordville School. Rich Shuck said he has discussed this some with Facilities Manager Bruce Davis. Rich said the school is designed in such a way that it could be broken into three sections for different uses such as for recreation during the day and town meetings at night, town offices, and as a community center. He said the portable classrooms could be taken down. He said they would need to figure out a way so that residents could park and use the beach and the kids could also play in the ball field safely at the same time. Leonard Clark suggested the Staffordville School might also be used as a community college satellite location. David Palmberg said parking might be an issue but he could see it as a possibility for Adult Education programs.

The Commission discussed the Burroughs School. David Perkins said the town may end up taking the school back. The Commission discussed the old transfer station and that it might be used for passive recreation. It was noted the Memorial Hall is currently being leased by the VFW and is being maintained. There were no plans for the Old Town Hall. It was noted the Ambulance Building is restricted to emergency services purposes.

The Commission discussed tax foreclosures around town. Rich Shuck suggested they encourage the creation of larger, more conforming lots where possible by joining these properties with abutters.

David Perkins said he will send memos out to the Fire Department and the WPCF asking about their future plans. It was agreed the Commission needs to push for feedback from the various Boards and Commissions to help shape the POCD.

5. Discussion about zoning map updates

This item was included in Item 4 of the agenda.

6. Discussion about recent state legislation.

David Palmberg provided a clarification on recreational marijuana. At the most, Stafford would be allowed one dispensary and one micro-cultivator. He said Attorney Ken Slater has recommended the town put a moratorium on these types of businesses for at least six months in order for things to settle out at the state level. The state will need to establish the requirements that local boards would need to meet. Dr. Mordasky said he was good with that so long as they spell out clearly the reason and need for a moratorium.

David Palmberg said the legislative changes for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are effective January 1st and they have to decide if they want to opt out on permitting them by right. He also discussed the automatic extensions on approvals which can add an additional nine years to approvals.

7. New Business

David Perkins said Wayne at the Airport brought him a proposal to hold a haunted Halloween type event to be held Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings during the month of October. There would be food sales and other activities.

David Palmberg said there is a company from Tolland that wants to do mostly auto repair and sell some used cars at the garage on East Street. This would be a new business and they might need to get ZBA location approval for this. The company is fine with placing a restriction on the number of vehicles for sale as the main focus of the operation would be car repair.

David Perkins said next month they will be seeing the application for the storage business at the Big Y property. Mr. Wittenzeller will also be coming before them with an Agritainment application.

8. Adjournment

Ron Houle made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Leonard Clark. All were in favor. Motion carried. The July 15, 2021 Stafford Planning & Zoning Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Annie Gentile
Recording Secretary